CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SURVEY SERIES

HISTORIC LANDMARKS, MONUMENTS AND STATE PARKS

Edited by Clark Wing

ASISTENCIA SAN ANTONIO de PALA

MISSION SUB-STATION - SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Registered Landmark #243

by

Don Morton

Written under auspices
of Work Projects Administration
Official Project #665-08-3-147

Sponsored by State of California, Department of Natural Resources
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Berkeley, 1939

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One of the most interesting chapels in the chain of historic California missions was an "extension" or sub-mission of San Luis Rey, known as La Asistencia de San Antonio de Pala situated in the northern part of San Diego County.[1] It was established by Father Peyrí in 1816, "in order that the padres of San Luis Rey might serve a large number of Indians who dwelt in the section."[2] "Pala" is an Indian word, meaning, in the Cupanian Mission Indian language "water."[3]

The Sub-mission Pala lies near the northern boundary of the Pala Reservation, about twenty miles east of the Mission San Luis Rey,[4] and sixty-six miles northeast of San Diego via Escondido,[5] on the western edge of the Cleveland

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2. R. Newcomb, "The Asistencia of San Antonio La Pala," The old mission churches and historic houses of California, 144.
3. O. A. Lovejoy, "A study of southern California place names," Historical Society of Southern California Publications, XI, 44. 1918.
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5. Automobile road map, No. 11, Oakland Tribune touring bureau, Oakland, California, 1939.

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National Forest.[6] It is located in the back country, Range 2 West, Township 9 South;[7] one of the most secluded of any of the Spanish church sites. "The succeeding twelve miles to Pala wind through a rocky valley following the bank of what must have been an amazingly uneasy conscienced river (San Luis Rey River), for it seems to be forever turning and twisting in its bed."[8] En route to the Pala Sub-mission Landmark from Oceanside, a wonderful vista of successive ranges extend to the northeast and east, with the snow-crowned San Jacinto Mountains seen far to the north on clear days in spring and winter, and the famous Palomar Mountains which form a natural barrier along the Riverside-San Diego County line.[9] "At all times of the year the color and light and shade in every part of the valley are most lovely. But it is in the spring that the hillsides and valley put on their most gorgeous robes, from the lightest tints of yellow and green, down through every hue and tone of red, blue and purple, soft and brilliant."[10]

The nearest stage and railroad station is at Fallbrook, about ten miles northwest of Pala, below Temecula,

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6. M. R. Tillotson, "Cleveland national forest," Agricultural and soil survey, San Diego County, 72, 1918.
7. Ibid., "Sketch map of San Diego County," 48-49.
8. T. Hall, California trails, intimate guide to the old missions, 25.
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locale of the colorful Overland Stage lines of the late 1850's. "In 1858, the quiet which still prevailed (within the vicinity of Temecula, and the Pala Sub-mission), was disturbed by big, three-seated coaches, drawn by dashing horses -- the Butterfield stages, which provided transportation and carried mail between San Francisco and St. Louis."[11] Today, 1939, modern stages travel over the hilly roads to Pala; branch lines of the inland route from San Diego to Los Angeles. In making an observation journey to the Pala Sub-mission about twenty-five years ago, an authority wrote:[12]

> The miles strung out unconscionably, but at last we saw, far up the valley, a low white tower which we knew to be the campanile of the Mission of San Antonio of Pala. In the gathering dusk we rode into the village, and bivouacked in the adobe-walled courtyard in the rear of the general store.... Lights shone here and there in the windows of the (Indian) cottages; the humble white-railed graves in the little Indian cemetery glimmered under the shadow of the old tower whose bells had counted out the lives of all that sleeping company; a mandolin tuckled; the mountains rose near and solemn all around; a bar of warm light shone from the half-open door of the padre's room in the cloister; from a new building, across the street came the

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11. R. L. Ellerbe, "History of Temescal valley," Historical Society of Southern California Publications, XI, 17, 1920.
12. J. S. Chase, California coast trails: A horseback ride from Mexico to Oregon, 33-35.

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> click of billard balls. So even Pala suffers change. Its great change came when a few years ago the Indians of Agua Caliente on Warner's Ranch, twenty miles to the east, were forcibly and ... shamefully driven from the place that they and their forefathers had inhabited from time uninemorial [sic], and on which there chanced to be some valuable mineral springs that invited exploitation. The Indians of Pala had dwindled to few in number, in compliance with the fiat ... so in business-like manner it was decided to lump the Agua Calientes with them ... of course they protested, and their friends among the whites appealed; but some one in authority on the other side of the continent had said it was to be and it was done.... The little church (Pala sub-mission) is inviting in its whitewashed simplicity. It is a plain rectangle of adobe, with tiled floor, unceiled roof, a few plain benches, and an altar ornamented with paper flowers.... The genial young priest has charge of four small Indian settlements beside this of Pala, namely, Potrero, Rincon, Pachanga, and Pauma. ...

It is said the picturesque "Bells of Pala" still call the Indians to worship, but that these are not the original Pala Indians. They were scattered after secularization of the mission system, 1834-1835.[13] Prior to the establishment of the California mission system in 1769; primarily to increase the Spanish royal revenue,[14] and the Pala Sub-mission in 1816.

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The native Indians who lived near the historic landmark were the Luiseños family.[15] The Luiseños were part of the great Sho-Sho-Ni nation. The latter's territory extended between Lake Tahoe and Lake Mono southwest beyond the San Gabriel to the San Luis Rey River, and from the foothills of the Sierras to the Kern and Santa Barbara rivers.[16] The Shoshonean linguistic family include the Bannocks of Idaho and Oregon, the Utes, Piutes, Comanches, Mokis and other tribes. It is further said that the Indians of the Shoshonean family occupied the coast of California from the mouth of Agua Hedionda Creek to about Point Duma. The first European to visit their territory was Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo who in 1542 saw Santa Catalina Island.[17] "The Luiseños are those living in the valley of the San Luis Rey between Pala and the San Jose Valley. These formerly occupied not only the river valley but also Palomar Mountain."[18] The original Pala Indians, or Luiseños, did not wander at will over their territory. It is said each band had its allotted district, in which it alone had the right to gather food and hunt. The land of each band seems

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15. P. S. Sparkman, "The culture of the Luiseño Indians," University of California Publications, American Archaeology and Ethnology, VIII, 188. August 7, 1908.
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to have been again subdivided among the different families of which the tribe was composed. That part of the land which was valuable for certain food products was subdivided.

There are more than twenty colorful Indian place-names within the vicinity of the Pala Sub-mission Landmark. They are scattered between Pala and the Palomar Mountain region. An authority gave the places and compiled names as follows:[19]

Place	The native Indians called it:
1. Where the Pala Indians had their encampment during the acorn-gathering season on Palomar -----	Shoau.
2. Where the Pauma Indians had their encampment during the acorn-gathering season on Palomar -----	Wavan.
3. Where the Yapicha Indians had their encampment during the acorn-gathering season on Palomar -----	Shautushma.
4. Where the Kuka or Potrero Indians had their encampment during acorn-gathering season on Palomar ----------	Paula.
5. Where the Pala Indians had their encampment during the acorn-gathering season on Palomar -----	Pala.
6. The hill near Pala flour mill -----	Ponawuk.
7. The Moro hill near Fallbrook ------	Katukto.
8. The small flat on Pauma ranch -----	Akipa.
9. Oak flat (Pauma ranch) ----------	Hunalapa.
10. Rodeo (Pauma ranch) ----------	Tutukvimai.
11. Antonio Serrano's house on Pauma ranch ----------	Kaxpa.
12. Peak of Palomar, near Bougher's ---	Ta'i.
13. Palomar Mountain ----------	Paauw.
14. Highest peak on Palomar Mountain --	Wikyo.
15. Iron spring on Palomar Mountain ---	Paisvi.

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16. Old Indian rancheria site on Palomar ---------- Malava.
17. Old Indian rancheria site on Palomar ---------- Wiya.
18. Old Indian rancheria site on Palomar ---------- Chakula.
19. Old Indian rancheria site on Palomar ---------- Ashachakwo.
20. Old Indian rancheria site on Palomar ---------- Pahamuk.
21. Old Indian rancheria site on Palomar ---------- Tokamai.
22. Old Indian rancheria site on Palomar ---------- Mokwonmai.
23. Old Indian rancheria site on Santa Margarita Ranch, near ranch house ---------- Topamai.

According to Kroeber the native Pala or Luiseño, and the Diegueño Indian languages are distinct. They form part, respectively of the great Uto-Aztekan and Yuman families. But the two tribes are physically similar and share in common the majority of their customs, arts, and beliefs.[20] When Kroeber visited the Rincon, Pauma, and Pala Indians in 1904, he secured much of his information regarding the Luiseño beliefs and customs from Felix Calac of Rincon, and Pachito an old man of Pauma. Calac and Pachito were native Luiseño Indians. They were not "Mission Indians." Kroeber further stated that Pachito was born at the old Indian village site (rancheria) by the Pauma cemetery, not far from the present rancheria of Pauma. "Neither he, his father, nor his

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There is a colorful Indian legend relative to the creation of the native Pala Indians or Luiseños. It is believed to have been told by "Nahachish," said to have been a native of the Temecula Tribe of the Luiseños. Part of the myth is found in a work concerning the Southern California Indians.[22] The locale of the story appeared to be near the historic towns of Temecula and Pala, and the Palomar Mountain.[23] It is said:

> One of the Temecula people was called Nahachish. He was a chief. He used to have in his house the limb of a tree cut into a hook and fastened up to hang food on. Some people broke the hook down. He became so poor that he had nothing to eat, and did not know what to do. He sang a song. He sang that he was going to leave that part of the country, but he did not know where to go. He went to Picha Awanga, between Temecula and Warner's Ranch, and named that place.... Then he went over the mountain to George Cook's to Palomar Mountain.... He stood looking and peering about, and could see no one. So he called the place Chikuli.... There is a place below here where he washed his hands, and called it Kaiyawahuna. He did this on a flat rock where one

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21. Kroeber, (edited by), University of California Publications, American Archaeology and Ethnology, VIII, 174. June 27, 1908.
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> can still see his footprints, and see where he knelt on the soft rock. There are footprints of deer there too.... He went below Pala to a place where they ground pinole for him so fine that he could not handle it, and was disappointed. They mixed it with poison to kill him. It made him sick, and he traveled toward home. He died on the way, and turned into a rock, which still stands near Temecula, two or three miles south.

They say that a priest once went out and baptized the rock because the people told him it was a man. The native Indians of Pala were of a superior type. They were athletic, being graceful dancers and magic runners.

The establishment of a chapel at Pala was a necessity in order to meet the needs of the great number of Indians living in the mountains and who were unable to attend services at the Mission San Luis Rey.[24] In 1811, Father Peyrí petitioned the Governor for permission to build a new and better church of adobes and brick.[25] However, the Governor's consent was withheld. Hence Father Peyrí in 1816 went out to Pala, twenty miles east of San Luis Rey and built a branch establishment. Rancho Pala was an outpost of Mission San Luis Rey. A large granary was built there in 1810.[26] The Sub-mission Pala is often termed as the "Pala Mission." The Campanile is known

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In 1818 the Pala chapel was lengthened. Another granary was constructed the same year, also one large apartment for the boys and young men and another for the girls and single Indian woman.[28] Father Antonio Peyrí was then one of the resident priests at San Luis Rey. He seems to have been a zealous priest. The orchard and buildings bear testimony of former good management. In times of trouble the Pala Submission, owing to its secluded position, escaped for a time, the more immediate reverses that others experienced.[29] It is said, that much property was removed there, at one time from San Luis Rey. During mission days the chapel was reached by a narrow trail that wound, paralleling the stream, up the river valley, but today this primitive road is replaced by a fine modern highway; part of the San Diego County road system.[30]

When Governor Victoria was exiled he went from San Gabriel to San Luis Rey to rest and recuperate. Father Peyrí

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27. McRoskey, The missions of California, 142.
28. Engelhardt, op. cit., 35.
29. F. J. Polley, "Life today in the Pala mission station," Historical Society of Southern California Publications, III, 41-42, 1893.
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30. Newcomb, The old mission churches and historic houses of California, 144.

who was in charge of the Sub-mission Pala, decided to leave with Governor Victoria for Europe. The Father took along four neophyte boys. He was heartbroken at having to leave his Mission and his Indian children. Several score of the latter followed him to San Diego on horseback, where he blessed them amid tears. It occurred during the secularization period, 1835-1836. By 1840, the Pala Mission Indians were in a pitiable condition. It is recorded that "all they had to clothe themselves with, were rags."[31] The abandonment of Pala by the Mission Indians, due to secularization and an earthquake resulted in its reaching a state of ruin. The flood of 1916, caused the Campanile to fall. However, donations of cash and work resulted in its restoration to as nearly as possible a complete replica of the original.[32]

From additional sources it is said that the Pala Sub-mission was deserted by its padres in 1829;[33] that the buildings were already in ruins before 1836. The ruins show that they originally were long and low, constructed of adobe with tiled roofs and graced by a corridor similar to those

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31. T. H. Hittell, "Juan Bautista: Governor of California," Overland monthly, VI, 478. November 1885.
32. Report No. 15, California Division of Parks in cooperation with the California State Chamber of Commerce. San Francisco, June 26, 1936.
33. Federal writers' project, California: A guide to the Golden State, 525.

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of the larger establishments. The interior of the chapel was floored with brick tile. The walls were decorated in a primitive and distinctive manner by the mission Indians. "The establishment of Pala, coming, as it did, late in the mission period, accounts for the incomplete working out of the plan."[34] It is further stated that the intention was, eventually, to have the well-known patio arrangement, as the three sides of the patio were in the beginning, enclosed by buildings. The cemetery stands at one side of the church, as at the missions, the only variation from the typical layout being the placing of the campanario (Campanile), which here stands detached from the church. Most of the graves are of a somewhat recent date, the older ones unmarked by name or initials. Some are decorated with shells; others are mere mounds of earth, bare of any sod. There are a few low shrubs scattered here and there in the walks.[35]

The Campanile stands 35 feet above the base which is 15 feet high. The wall is three feet thick. Steps in the rear lead up to the two bells which swing one above the other, being suspended from the beams by rawhide thongs. Originally the Campanile appeared to rest upon a base of

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34. P. Elder, The old Spanish missions of California, 80.
35. Carter, The missions of Nueva California, an historical sketch, 125.

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well-worn granite boulders. They were brought up from the San Luis Rey River bed and cemented together. The revealing and destroying storm of 1916 showed that these boulders were but a covering for a mere adobe base, which, it is said (as evidenced by its standing for practically a whole century, 1816-1916), its builders deemed secure enough to sustain the weight of the super-structure. Resting upon this base was the two-story tower. The upper story was terraced, as it was upon the lower, and smaller in size.[36] In describing the "Bells of Pala" an authority said:[37]

> Pictures of California missions are common enough, but these of Pala are rare. Not one in a thousand know anything of the place....
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> The charm of charms to me, apart from the natural scenery, were these bells, before the present daub of plaster was recently put on the tower, not a day passed without some time spent with them. The belfry stands some distance from the old mission building, and rises from the flat plain so as to be a beautiful landmark from every point in the valley.... Not a bell at this old mission but has its history and legend. They have rung for war and peace, and have seen the glory and decadence of the mission life; but now rusted, and some of them broken, they hang, silently in their ruined towers to peal forth only on special occasions when the old life is revived during the yearly festival....

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36. G. W. James, Picturesque Pala, 28.
37. Polley, "Life today in the Pala mission station," Historical Society of Southern California Publications, III, 45. 1893.

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One of the most precious bequests which any age can leave to its successors is the charm of its own characteristic spirit. "The most valued possessions of any age is the flavor of the traditions and the relics of bygone times."[38] They tell their story of struggle and conquest, of decay, of defeat, of peace and war; of the evolution of a people.

It is further stated that the Sub-mission La Asistencia de San Antonio de Pala was saved as an historic landmark during the late 1890's by the Landmarks Club of Southern California. The Landmarks organization was incorporated in 1895 to conserve the missions and other historic spots of Southern California.[39] The agitation for the restoration of the old Pala Mission is believed to have been started by Charles F. Lummis.[40] In a report for 1903, Lummis said:

> At Pala ... that jewel among the valleys of southern California, and now doubly interesting, as the new home of the evicted Warner's Ranch Indians (The Agua Caliente tribe of the Sho-Sho-Ni Nation), the first Indians in United States history moved to better lands and more lands than they had before ... the /Landmarks/ Club has already re-roofed the chapel with tiles (a building 47x27 feet),

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38. W. L. Judson, "The architecture of the missions," Historical Society of Southern California Publications, VIII, 114. 1908.
39. North American Press Association, "Handbook of Southern California," 23.
40. C. F. Lummis, "Thus far and much farther," Out West, XIX, 23-24. July 1903.

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> built up the broken walls of the whole front to the roof level; and is, at this writing, going on with the re-roofing of those rooms with tiles. Total area, re-roofed with tiles, 5,157 square feet. Walls built up for re-roofing, but not yet roofed, 132x27 feet. Incidentally the club has also (after, a long campaign) secured the transfer of these ruins from a squatter back to their rightful ownership, and has taken a long lease....

It is said that in the early nineties when investigation as to the condition of Pala was made by the Southern California Historical Society, the properties were found to be in the possession of a Mr. Viele.[41] "The chapel remained in very much the same condition described by Professor Polley until the fall of 1901, when the Landmarks Club of Southern California, headed by Charles F. Lummis, made an investigation of the state of the premises and set in motion a movement to restore the structure."[42] It is further stated that the natives were interested in the restoration plan. At a meeting held at the Pala village store many pledged money and others labor toward the proposed work. By 1903 the most pressing repairs were made. Meanwhile, a deed of the property was obtained from Mr. Viele and in turn transferred to the rightful owners, the Catholic Church of California. Thus the

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41. Newcomb, The old mission churches and historic houses, of California, 149.
42. Ibid., 151.

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Sub-mission La Asistencia de San Antonio de Pala was once more in condition for services.

Thus, too, the village of Pala grew up around the historic Sub-mission. The town has a population of 260 people.[43] It is the trading center for the Pala Indian Reservation. The Reservation has a small village of portable wooden shelters. American music and gambling have largely replaced tribal customs.

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43. Federal writers' project, California: A guide to the Golden State, 525.

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